

FINGERNAILS

the nurse looked at my face.
"are you a seaman?" she asked.
"no," I said.
"then this didn't happen on the job?"
"no," I said, "I don't work."
"how did this happen to you?" the nurse asked.
"a woman," I explained, "fingernails ..."
"oh," she laughed, "well, fill out these papers, the doctor will see you soon"

there were a long list of questions like:
have you ever been in a mental institution?
have you had v.d.?
do you hate your parents?
do you consider authority necessary?
do you sleep on your back?
do you dislike sex?
what is your favorite color?
how many times a month do you masturbate?
if you had a chance, would you take it?

I felt that the nurse had possibly given me the wrong paper.

there were a dozen other questions of similar nature.

to all the questions I answered,
I don't know.

the doctor came in, glanced at the sheet, put it down.

"you say a woman did this?"
"yes."

"did she bite you?"
"no."

"what do you want?"

"a tetanus shot ..."

"whenja have your last one?"

"I don't know"

the doctor grabbed my face, started squeezing it.

some of the scabs broke.
I began bleeding.

"how does that feel?" he asked.

"peachy-keen," I told him.

"o.k.," he said, "the nurse will give you your shot ..."

he began to walk out of the room
then stopped and turned, "by the way, this woman, why did she do this to you?"

"I don't know"

the Dr. left
as the blood dripped down onto my shirt collar.